



# Y's Men International **YMI** WORLD

"To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right"

Only for private distribution to members



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**Dear readers**

Now that the hustle and bustle surrounding the centenary year and its celebrations are over, it's time to start looking forward to another hundred years of meaningful service. The



messages from the International President and the International Secretary General give us the contours for that.


This issue's cover story is about how a club tucked deep down in the southern tip of India is attempting to address the growing drug menace that has gained alarming proportions. The accessibility of synthetic drugs such as MDMA and LSD has increased and there is peer pressure on youngsters to explore these drugs. It makes the student community one of the most vulnerable sections of society and the year-long campaign by one District has evoked much response and appreciation.

The guest essay is on the current talk of the world. Will artificial intelligence and chatbots such as ChatGPT be a bane or a boon to humankind? There are apprehensions about their use and influence. Jonas Simmerlein, a 29-year-old theologian and philosopher from the University of Vienna recently conducted a 40-minute church service created by ChatGPT recently. He admits he "actually accompanied it" because about 98 percent of that came from the machine. Our essayist too admits having used ChatGPT for his sermon, but not to the extent that Simmerlein did. We'll let our readers arrive at their own judgment about this new 'disruptor' in our life.

Carlos Sanvee, Secretary General of the World YMCA, shares with us the enthusiasm with which the YMCAs around the world have embraced 'Vision 2030' and the rapid progress it has made. Its four 'pillars' - Community Wellbeing, Meaningful Work, Sustainable Planet, and Just World - are all very much aligned with the objectives of YMI, as manifested in 'Strategy 2032' which revolves around the slogan, "Eminence in Fellowship and Community Impact" and focusing on three principal action areas, namely, health,

Members of the public joined Y's Men club members of District 1 of Southwest India Region at the starting point of the rally to raise awareness on drug abuse.

Y's Men International  
Y Service Clubs International



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environment, and education.

With an increasing focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligning our work accordingly, especially with the preservation of the environment, we are pleased to include a document titled "Water Justice Manifesto" which was presented at the United Nations Water Conference by over 500 organisations including NGOs. The manifesto should give us ample food for thought and enough impetus to launch some of our actions under the 'Environment' umbrella.

Finally, there is an urgent call from our International Historian to preserve our heritage. Working with IHQ in preparation for the centennial celebration, some of us discovered how scarce the information we have on our movement is, especially from the local and regional levels. Let us take up this call to preserve our heritage seriously and showcase to the world a more vibrant movement at the next milestone event, maybe when we celebrate our 125th year.

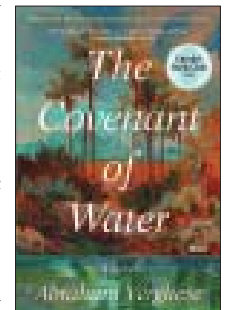
Y'sly

**Koshy Mathew**

## FROM MY BOOKSHELF

*The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese

*The Covenant of Water* is the long-awaited new novel by Abraham Verghese, the author of *Cutting for Stone*. Published in 2009, *Cutting for Stone* became a literary phenomenon, selling over 1.5 million copies in the United States alone and remaining on the New York Times bestseller list for over two years.



Spanning the years 1900 to 1977, *The Covenant of Water* is set in Kerala, on South India's Malabar Coast, and follows three generations of a family that suffers a peculiar affliction: in every generation, at least one person dies by drowning—and in Kerala, water is everywhere. The family is part of a Christian community that traces itself to the time of the apostles, but times are shifting, and the matriarch of this family, known as Big Ammachi—literally "Big Mother"—will witness unthinkable changes at home and at large over the span of her extraordinary life. All of Verghese's great gifts are on display in this new work: there are astonishing scenes of medical ingenuity, fantastic moments of humor, a surprising and deeply moving story, and characters imbued with the essence of life.

A shimmering evocation of a lost India and of the passage of time itself, *The Covenant of Water* is a hymn to progress in medicine and to human understanding, and a humbling testament to the hardships undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today. It is one of the most masterful literary novels published in recent years.

(A Goodreads review)

# From the International President



## Dear friends

As we come to the end of a year and approach the beginning of a new YMI year, I am happy to share with you some of my hopes and dreams for the upcoming term.

## Better Fellowship

A story, or simply a smile, shared with another Y's Man or Woman for me is a treasured occasion. I hope that all clubs will engage in building fellowship among their members and in their communities by reaching out to new people and new groups. This may involve stepping outside your comfort zone.

At the international level, the concept of a Club President Elect (CPE) Institute currently under development will give club leaders opportunity to connect, share ideas and learn together with the help of skilled facilitators. I am excited about the follow-up as the new programme is being fine-tuned. Remember 'eminence in fellowship' has been defined as a mission of objective within Strategy 2032.

## Better Communication

As you are probably aware, my slogan is 'Good Communication Is the Cornerstone of All Cooperation'. I encourage everyone to follow modern communication protocol and to be familiar with the YMI Communication Tree.

Good communication creates fellowship from which cooperation can grow. In YMI we speak about many words beginning with 'I': 'idealism', 'initiative', 'industry', 'interest', 'innovation', 'inclusivity'. I would like to add 'integrity' to that list. Be honest, forthright and fair in all your interactions.

## Focus on Education, Environment and Health Projects under Strategy 2032

Strategy 2032 instructs us to streamline our activities to provide focus on the pertinent issues of education, environment, and health. I would like to see clubs working to increase their activities on environmental initiatives putting emphasis on UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, 'Take Urgent to Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impact'. Please continue to actively engage in Week4Waste clean up campaigns. Consider tree planting projects with schools and other institutions.

## Membership Development

In my mind, a strong club has at least 15 active members. I urge all clubs to try to induct at least one new member in the coming year. I am encouraging the creation of Extension Teams at the club level, ideally comprising six persons with the objective of recruiting one person during the year.

## YMCA Relations

YMI was originally founded to support the YMCA, and this remains a key element of our identity in 2023. I would like to see our relationship continue to develop, to become more modern and reciprocal as we become true mission partners working in harmony for an equitable and sustainable world.

## Let Your (Our) Light Shine

My theme 'Let Your Light Shine' is inspired by the Bible passage of Matthew 5:16. Let us not hide our light under a basket, but instead illuminate the good work we are doing around the world. We should actively and proudly share what we do and tell good stories to bring new people into our clubs, to increase our impact. We are often too humble. In 2023/24 we need to give priority to building awareness and brand identity. The light of one club on its own may be considered feeble but when thousands of single bulbs shine together clarity and luminosity on a grand scale can be achieved.

With my deepest respect and warm wishes.

Ulrik Lauridsen



# YMI – Beyond the Centennial: Embracing Change and Impact



For the past hundred years, Y's Men and Women have served as beacons of light in their communities, illuminating the path towards a better, more just, and compassionate world. Through their selfless acts, YMI club members have touched countless lives, providing support to local YMCA initiatives and extending aid to those in need.

Their dedication to promoting positive change has earned them a reputation synonymous with service and sacrificial giving. Over the last century, YMI has consistently demonstrated the power of ordinary individuals to make an extraordinary difference, uplifting not only their own lives but also the lives of others.

Recently in Taiwan, we celebrated the centennial anniversary of YMI, commemorating the theme "Great Because of You." Indeed, YMI's greatness stems from the collective efforts of every club member, past and present leaders, the YMCA, and the community. Through our unwavering commitment to our founding purpose, we have embodied love, sacrifice, compassion, and generosity, bringing glory to God through our benevolent deeds.

As we embark on the journey into the next century, it is crucial to reflect on what has brought us to this point and contemplate our future direction. We must contemplate the vision that has guided us for the past hundred years and adapt to the changing society, evolving needs, and shifting dynamics of the YMCA. Our movement is undergoing a modernisation process, exploring the possibility of building a new brand that remains relevant in the 21st century by addressing the present-day needs of the community and our collaborative partnership with the YMCA in creating equitable and sustainable societies.

Beyond the centennial milestone, our gaze must also turn towards the future. Our world faces significant challenges, ranging from climate change to social inequality. As YMI club members, we embrace the responsibility to step up as leaders in our community, driving positive change and inspiring others to follow suit. Let us continue to champion positive transformation, as it is through our collective efforts that we shape our future.

Guided by Strategy 2032, we have outlined a ten-year blueprint to elevate YMI as an organisation renowned for fellowship and community impact. This strategic plan

inspires us to work collaboratively, united by a common purpose, to build an equitable and sustainable world. It is time to renew our commitment to a stronger engagement with the YMCA as a mission partner, enhancing our collective impact and expanding our global presence. By focusing on the pillars of identity, innovation, and inclusivity, we pave the way for a lasting legacy as an international service organisation.

As we embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, let us forge ahead with determination, passion, and a shared vision. Together, we can continue to make a profound difference, leaving an indelible mark on the world. YMI's journey beyond the centennial is one of adaptation, growth, and unwavering commitment to serving humanity by building our identity, adapting innovation, and embracing inclusivity.



# HOMAGE

The International Association of Y's Men's Clubs mourns the loss of Past International Presidents Mr Erick H. Kim, who died on Wednesday 29 March 2023, aged 89, and Mr Finn Pedersen, who died on Tuesday 9 May 2023, aged 77.



**PIP Erik H. Kim**

**73rd International President – 1998/99**

**12 February 1934 – 29 March 2023 (89 years)**

PIP Kim's involvement in YMI spanned more than 5 decades and two continents. He was a charter member of the Daejeon-Han Bat club in South Korea in 1967 before moving to the USA where he help establish the Hollywood Wilshire Korean club in 1976. After the Wilshire club disbanded in 2003, he was most recently a member of the Diamond Bar-East Valley club in California.

Throughout his time with YMI, he was a tireless servant, serving multiple terms as Club President and in Regional and Area Service Director positions, particularly for Christian Emphasis, drawing on his deep Christian faith and background as a bible college teacher. Professionally he was also in the garment industry, establishing a formal-wear manufacturing company in 1976.

He was the Pacific Southwest Regional Director 1987/88, an International Council Member 1994-97, and the United States Area President 1995/96. Recognised for his exceptional leadership, he was elected as the 73rd International President of the Association, serving in 1998/99.

PIP Kim was a regular attendee at Regional, Area, and International Conventions and was known and respected by club members the world over. He will be sadly missed by his friends, family, and YMI club members.

Rest in peace, PIP Erick Kim.



**PIP Finn Pedersen**

**86th International President – 2011/12**

**24 April 1946 – 9 May 2023 (77 years)**

Finn joined the YMI movement as a charter member of the Y's Men's Club of Stavanger St. Svithun in 1982. In 1986 he was the charter club president of the Y's Men's Club of Hinna. From the beginning, Finn was an active and dedicated member, steadily taking on leadership positions at the club, District, Region and Area levels until finally becoming International President in 2011/12 with the theme 'Audere est Facere – To Dare is to Do' – and the slogan 'Just Do It'. He played an integral part in the organisation of the International Convention in Stavanger in 2012. After his IEO term, he continued to serve YMI, holding various positions at the both local and international levels, including serving as member of the Constitution Review Committee and as an ISD Mentor.

Finn worked in the banking and financial industry during his career, but he made it a priority to give back to the community. He was active in the YMCA and provided voluntary treasury services to local church and non-profit societies in Stavanger.

PIP Finn passed away at a hospital in Stavanger after a battle with cancer. The funeral took place at Hinna Church in Stavanger, Norway on Friday 19 May.

Finn is survived by his wife, Ragnhild. YMI shares its deepest condolences to her and to Finn's extended family and his friends.

Rest in peace, PIP Finn Pedersen.

## India: Bid to Reverse the Growing Trend of Drug Abuse Among Youth

The Y's Men's Club of Marthandam Kings in District 1 of South West India Region (SWIR) took the lead in organising a walkathon in March 2023 to create awareness against the use of drugs by youngsters. Over 1,500 students of S.T. Hindu College, Nagercoil joined in the effort and walked through the streets of the city in a bid to reverse the growing trend of drug abuse among youth in Kerala, India.

Kerala state in southern India in which SWIR is operational has been dealing with an unprecedented rise in the number of cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. According to the latest statistics, there were over 26,000 cases in 2022, which is almost 300 per cent more than the cases reported in 2016. What is more concerning though is that more and more children are falling into the trap of drug addiction, and are being used by drug pushers to sell them. According to a survey conducted recently by the state police, among drug users below the age of 21, 40 per cent were children below 18 years of age.

It is in this context that SWIR adopted the 'Say No To Drugs' campaign as the Regional project during the activity year 2022-23.

Recognising the seriousness and the subsequent implications of substance abuse in the country, various state governments and government bodies have been implementing many programmes to check the unabated spread of drug abuse. Programmes such as imparting awareness of the ill effects of drugs including marijuana, conducting counselling sessions, and offering treatment and rehabilitation are some of them.

Several YMI clubs in the Region joined hands with the government during the course of the year and conducted a series of awareness classes for children of various schools and



Club members ready to lead the march

colleges. The clubs also took part in the campaigns and rallies conducted by government agencies against the use of drugs. Many clubs too have conducted independent walkathons to drive home the point to the general public.

Niranjana Bimal, International Council Member Elect, SWIR



Students attending an awareness session



Students of S.T. Hindu College participating in the campaign



# ChatGPT - Bane or Boon?

Fr. M K George

ChatGPT – the popular artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot – is reported to have reached 100 million users in just two months after its launch in November 2022. According to a report, the chatbot clocked 13 million users per day in January. The platform has surpassed other social media apps including Instagram and TikTok which took 2.5 years and 9 months, respectively, to cross 100 million users. In the following essay the author examines the likely social, ethical, and moral pitfalls and warns us to be skilled enough to be not outsmarted by AI.

A few months ago, a friend introduced me to ChatGPT. I was amazed. Immediately, I used it to get an outline for a lecture I had to give soon after. Quick, to the point and absolutely logical and convincing, I felt ChatGPT is going to be a boon.



Reviewing current literature on ChatGPT (generative pre-trained transformer), I realise there are already contrary opinions. As on 12 April, seven countries – Russia, China, North Korea, Cuba, Syria, Iran,

and Italy – have banned ChatGPT.

It may be worth examining what are the promises and threats posed by ChatGPT.

## What is ChatGPT?

“ChatGPT is a natural language processing tool driven by AI (artificial intelligence) technology that allows you to have human-like conversations

and much more with the chatbot. The language model can answer questions and assist you with tasks, such as composing emails, essays, and code,” says Sabrina Ortiz, associate editor of New York-based ZDNET.

Artificial intelligence (AI) research company OpenAI released it in November 2022, and since then it has captured the imagination of all. The versatility of the application is just unbelievable.

The AI-powered chatbot could revolutionise everything from customer service to how we search online. It can code computer programmes, compose music, draft emails, summarise articles, podcasts, and presentations, script social media posts, create a title for an article, solve math problems, discover keywords for search engine

optimisation, write articles, blog posts, and quizzes for websites, reword existing content for a different medium, such as a presentation transcript for a blog post, formulate product descriptions, play games, assist with job searches, including writing resumes and cover letters, describe complex topics more simply, and many others.

Farhad Manjoo, a journalist with the *New York Times* wrote recently, “Already, ChatGPT is changing how I do my job.” Many other professionals attest this observation.

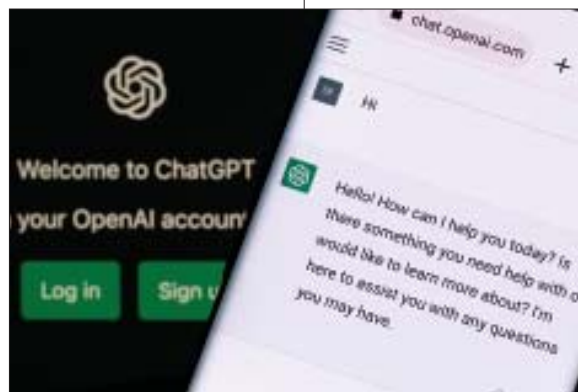
## Concerns

The countries that have already banned ChatGPT are responding to assumed threats of various types. “Some of these countries banned the application based on privacy concerns, while others, particularly North Korea, China, and Russia, claimed that the US would use ChatGPT to spread misinformation,” said John Martindale, an IT specialist, on 12 April.

“People are expressing concerns about AI chatbots replacing or atrophying human intelligence. For example, the chatbot can draft an article on any topic efficiently (though not necessarily accurately) within seconds, potentially eliminating the need for a human writer,” says Ortiz. On the shadow side, ChatGPT can be incorrect and even nonsensical.

Other concerns include the fear that humans might lose jobs. Some say that technological advancements have always resulted in jobs being lost, but the speed of AI advancements means there are multiple industries facing the same problem. From education to illustration to customer service roles, ChatGPT and its underlying technology is going to drastically reshape our modern world.

The fears that it will influence the quality of education are equally worrying. In a world where the quality of education for the masses is losing quality, this is not good news at all.



Fr. M.K. George, an ordained Jesuit priest, formerly Principal of Loyola College, Trivandrum, India, is stationed in Rome as Counsellor to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

## PIP Finn Pedersen – A Personal Tribute

It was with great sadness that we received the news that our much beloved former International President of Y's Men International, Finn A. Pedersen, had passed away on 9 May 2023, aged 77 years old. Finn became a member of Stavanger St Svithun Y's Men's Club in 1982. In 1986, he chartered Hinna Y's Men's Club and was the club's charter president.



Finn assumed early responsibility within the movement and quickly gained important positions as an officer at various levels. He was a member of the Norway Regional Board in 1999/2000 and served as Regional Director in 2003/2004. He was elected a member of the International Council in 2005-2008 and became President of Area Europe 2006/2007. He served as International

President in 2011/12 with the theme "Audere est Facere – To Dare is to Do" – and the slogan "Just Do It".

Finn was also heavily involved in the preparation and organisation of the International Convention in Stavanger in 2012. After his tenure as an International Executive Officer, he happily shared his time and expertise through positions of trust within the Y's Men, both internationally and nationally. He was a highly-esteemed member of the Constitution Review Committee for several years, and in addition, serving as an International Service Director Mentor (Advisor to the members of ICM and the international service leaders).

His working career took place in the banking and finance industry.

Besides, he was active in the local YMCA and put in considerable work in his local church, Hinna, in Stavanger, and in other local organisations.

Ragnhild and Finn were a pair of globetrotters and participated for many years in countless International Conventions and other YMI events all over the world. I have had the pleasure of travelling with Ragnhild and Finn on many of their travels to several continents. Finn also arranged trips to many Y's Men events (e.g. Korea and Russia), and many have fond memories of there. Finn always put a lot of effort into the preparations, so that the participants could feel safe along the way. He was also very interested in sports and especially soccer. He visited London many times to watch his favourite team, Tottenham Hotspurs, when they played their matches at White Hart Lane.

Finn had friends all over the world, which is testified through the numerous words of remembrance and greetings posted strongly on social media.

To me, Finn was both a mentor, inspiration, and advisor, in addition to being a very good friend. Finn was also the one who, on behalf of Y's Men International, officially installed me as International President in Las Vegas, US, when I started my term in 2017/2018.

Finn leaves behind his faithful supporter Ragnhild. We share her grief over the loss of a life partner, a fellow walker, and someone who was a friend of her friends. May peace shine over Finn Asbjørn Pedersen's good memory.

May peace shine over Finn Asbjørn Pedersen's good memory.

Henry J. Grindheim

International President 2017/2018

### GUEST ESSAY (from previous page)

#### Warnings

The direct impact of this technology on social life is the threat of using it to spread hate speech and polemics all around. Fake news can spread faster and more efficiently with AI-aided Chatbots. In the area of Human Rights, the threats are equally real: "It is possible to propagate discrimination through the use of a chatbot if it is configured to employ language that's biased against particular groups. The right to equality requires that the chatbot be built with vocabulary that is both inclusive and non-discriminatory," warns Jyotirmoy Banerjee, data scientist.

The power that AI holds is really a possibility and a threat. With high moral sensibilities, it is powerful. In the hands of dictators, who are all around, unfortunately, this tool is a threat to humanity.

It can create ethical problems. While praising the benefits of technology and artificial intelligence. Pope Francis says that AI raised serious questions and must be used ethically and responsibly to promote human dignity

and the common good (Vatican correspondent Deborah Castellano Lubov, 27 March 2023).

The Pope said, "I would therefore encourage you, in your deliberations, to make the intrinsic dignity of every man and woman the key criterion in evaluating emerging technologies; these will prove ethically sound to the extent that they help respect that dignity and increase its expression at every level of human life."

Whether you like it or not, ChatGPT is in the headlines every day. Your familiarity, competence and expertise to deal with it is going to be crucial not just for yourself but for the whole of humanity. In a perceptive essay titled, 'We don't know what will happen next', Jerome Roos wrote, "The solutions we pursue today – on global peace, the clean energy transition and the regulation of AI – will one day come to form the basis of a new world order."

Artificial intelligence is not something you should be scared of. However, you must be skilled enough not to be replaced by AI.



## 'Vision 2030' is Happening!

Carlos Sanvee, Secretary-General, World YMCA

Since its adoption at the 20th YMCA World Council in July 2022, there has been rapid acceleration in the way the Movement has embraced its road map to 2030, both individually and collectively.



'This is our time; this is our moment' was what we said in Aarhus. It's our moment to step up and be the world's partner of choice as a youth empowerment organisation.

YMCAs are seriously asking how they can align their existing or their new plans with our shared global vision. Research in February revealed that 75 of our

National Movements have activated, were activating or would activate it.

And that's happening at the local level too. When National General Secretaries met in Colorado at end-March, they heard how our hosts at YMCA Rockies could align almost their entire strategic plan with the four Pillars of Vision 2030.

### Some still ask: what is Vision 2030?

On the surface, it's one shared vision, one shared mission, four shared priorities in what we call the Pillars of Impact, and three goals for each of those Pillars.

One an internal YMCA goal; one a goal for the communities we serve; and one a global advocacy goal as we seek the raise the voice of young people worldwide.

But beneath and above the surface, it's a first-ever truly common purpose designed to align a Movement for greater impact, greater coherence and greater clarity – as much to ourselves within our Movement, as to the people and especially the partners and donors outside it, with whom we work.

World YMCA has taken part in strategy and planning debates on Vision 2030 – live or online – in the US, in Canada, in England and Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland, in Germany, in France, in Belgium, in Norway, in Kenya, in South Africa, in India, in Philippines, in Hong Kong. All of these YMCAs are absolutely serious about aligning with Vision 2030.

By year-end, we in World YMCA have three goals:

### The Three Goals

First, to establish and make functional four Movement-wide 'Pillar teams', one for each of the four Vision 2030



Pillars: Community Wellbeing, Meaningful Work, Sustainable Planet, Just World.

It will recruit leaders for each, and then populate the teams with willing volunteers from National Movements, asking one National Movement to take a turn as a 'champion' for each Pillar.

Second, to establish four 'Movement Support functions' to help the Movement deliver Vision 2030 in four areas. These are Strategic Alignment; Learning, Innovation and Impact; Advocacy and Influence; Resource Mobilisation.

And third, to repurpose our own team and operations in World YMCA to support those Pillar Teams and those Movement Support Functions. In short, to support the Movement to deliver Vision 2030.

We are also heavily engaged in mobilising internal and external financial resources, including a potential game-changer in the form of the first ever global 'youth futures' Impact Fund, as a way of funding and bringing to scale our worldwide efforts to support Meaningful Work.

### Phenomenal Progress

'On the ground', there is much to report, especially in our Vision 2030-related work with others as we step up to play in the Premier League of youth empowerment, where we belong.

In our 'digital equity' programme, we are delighted to have launched the first of several YMCA digital hubs, powered by HP, with YMCA Greater Houston.

Several more will be launched this year: in Moldova; in Long Beach, USA; in New Delhi, India; and in the Western Balkans covering Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo.

Already, we have reached more than 100,000 people

through these hubs: mostly young people in schools who have never used a computer.

In the field of supporting refugees, we are delighted that - thanks to the excellent work done by YMCA Europe - Accenture has just scaled its grant by an additional USD 800,000 this year.

We continue to run impressive programmes in the YMCAs of Slovakia, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine to connect under-served groups, including Ukrainian refugees, with opportunities to go online and access jobs and education.



I'm also pleased to report growing collaboration with UNICEF's 'Generation Unlimited' programme, in three areas: social enterprise development (as part of Gen U's ImaGen venture initiative); creating a more sustainable planet (as part of Gen U's Green Rising initiative); and on youth volunteering.

Meanwhile the 5th cohort of YMCA Change Agents is well and truly underway, consisting of 120 young leaders from 57 countries. It is now moving into what we call the '21st Century Skills' modules. We will do 4 of these over the next 4 months.



But investing in our future means investing right now. World YMCA estimates that it needs USD 1.5 million over the next 18 months to make all this happen.

We should all ask ourselves where this will lead us: quite simply it will make us the best that we can be - for ourselves, for the young people we serve, and for those we work with.

This beloved YMCA Movement of ours, 179 years old on 6 June, is on a shared journey called Vision 2030.

In saluting our friends at, I want to thank all our friends at Y's Men International for journeying with us.

**Can Y's Men members support the YMCA Vision 2030 Fund which aims to raise USD 1.5 million by end-2024?**

**Please visit the World YMCA Donate webpage or contact [carlos@ymca.int](mailto:carlos@ymca.int) or [kathleen@ymca.int](mailto:kathleen@ymca.int).**

## LEGENDARY PERSONALITY

### *Rachelle R. Reeg: First Female IP*

It has taken years for women to achieve close to the same rights as men in society. The fight is an ongoing one. Prescribed gender roles often become hurdles that stand in the way of success for women, while for their male counterparts the track runs smooth. So, every time women achieve leadership positions, it should be well understood that there is at least an implicit struggle in the process due to her gender.

Women have been allowed membership in Y's Men International since 1974, and with the passing of a decade, women started to occupy key roles in the organisation. One such woman was Rachelle R. Reeg, who was elected to the position of International Council Member from 1986 to 1989 and was Area President in 1987. In 1990, Rachelle Reeg became the first female International President of Y's Men International and set a high benchmark for future presidents.

Rachelle, who was a first-generation college graduate, earned a master's degree in

education and later became an elementary school principal. Her role as an educator was an important tone that added useful values to her life, and one for which she had worked extremely hard. She balanced her work and family life by compromising on neither and became a source of inspiration for many women both within and outside the organisation.

She has successfully been part of many projects and fundraisers. It was during her tenure as International President, that the Roll Back Malaria project, now an ongoing global programme, was introduced. For all her outstanding work, Rachelle received YMI's highest tribute, the Harry M. Ballantyne Award in 2011. Rachelle R. Reeg remains in

the chapters of Y's Men International as an exceptional example of leadership and female empowerment and surely continues to inspire and motivate the women in the organisation.

Source: Celebrating Our Legacy: Milestones • Legends • Impacts (a YMI publication)



The Harry M. Ballantyne Award is the highest award given by Y's Men. Recently in a club meeting for Carondelet Y Service Club (St Louis), the two members that have received the award were together. This club is the only one to have two FEMALE awardees as members. It also is a club that has provided one International President, three Area Presidents, and a host of other leaders for the Area and the International. Seen above is 2023 awardee Debbie Campbell Redmond (left), and the 2011 awardee Rachelle R. Reeg.

## The World's First Club Outside USA Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

Sydney-Riverview Y Service Club, Nova Scotia, Canada, the first club outside the USA, hosted the 72nd Maritime Regional Convention from 19-22 May in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. The event marked the 100th anniversary of the chartering of the Sydney Y's Men's Club. The Sydney club was the first club to be chartered outside of the United States and bears the title of "the Club which made Y's Men International."

The Convention was well attended and began with the raising of the YMI flag at the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Civic Centre along with the reading of a proclamation celebrating this most auspicious occasion by the mayor.



A golf tournament held on Friday as a fundraiser for Roll Back Malaria fetched over CAD 750.00. A reception with food and entertainment was held as delegates registered at the Sydney-Riverview Community Centre on Friday evening. Old friendships were rekindled, and new ones were forming as attendees mingled with one another in a very warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Our YMCA CEO Sabrina Vatcher was in attendance and was pleased to receive a donation of CAD 400.00 from the Cumberland Y Service Club in honour of the Sydney-Riverview club's 100th anniversary.



### Fellowship, Food and Fines

The President's Banquet was held on Saturday evening and featured a very lively "fines session" and a keynote address by Sydney-Riverview President, Laurie Murchison on the topic "Where do we go from here." On Sunday evening the international banquet also featured a fun "fines session" and a very informative presentation by Past International President Joan Wilson, on the 100th anniversary celebrations of YMI held in Taiwan in March. We were also pleased to have received congratulatory notes from our IP, ISG, the World Alliance of YMCAs, the USA Area President and the Toledo Y's Men's Club. There was superb local entertainment provided at both banquets and they were thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees.

The Sydney-Riverview Y Service Club was indeed very honoured to have been enrolled in the Golden Book on the occasion of the club's 100th anniversary, by the Pictou Y Service Club and the Pictou Y Service Club Women.

On Saturday afternoon, attendees were treated to outings to the Miner's Museum in nearby Glace Bay, a town with a long tradition of coal mining, as well as to the Membertou Heritage Park, a very informative exposition on

Mi'kmaq history and culture. The Mi'kmaq people are indigenous to our area, and we are proud to have them share in our celebrations.

On Sunday morning, a church service was hosted by the Sydney-Riverview club, featuring readings and a solo by a Y's Man. The service was followed by the induction of the Regional Team for 2023/24. There were a few Past Area Presidents of Canada/Caribbean in attendance as illustrated in the photo below.



Saturday evening's banquet ended with the singing of "Happy Birthday" to the Sydney-Riverview Y Service Club and the cutting and distribution of the celebratory cake.



On Monday morning the Sydney-Riverview Club hosted a farewell breakfast at its Community Centre which was very well attended and featured warm goodbyes and best wishes.

Submitted by Laurie Murchison & Carol and Sandy Reynolds



## Malaysia: Fruits of Labour!



The Y Service Club of Johor Eagles appreciates the initiative of Pusat Jagaan Syukur Hati (Grateful Heart Care Centre) for exposing their wards and caretakers to the nuances of monitoring and maintaining a farm. For over a month they were at the Y Eagles' Satellite Farm in Bukit Indah experimenting and learning. They have learned how to monitor the operation of the farm, water flow, and levels including hands-on experience in cleaning the filters, guided by our members. Due to their dedication, eagerness, and commitment, we have decided to move one of our farms to their location! While signing the MOU, the caretaker said that the farm would not be just for the benefit of the centre but would also impact the area around them.

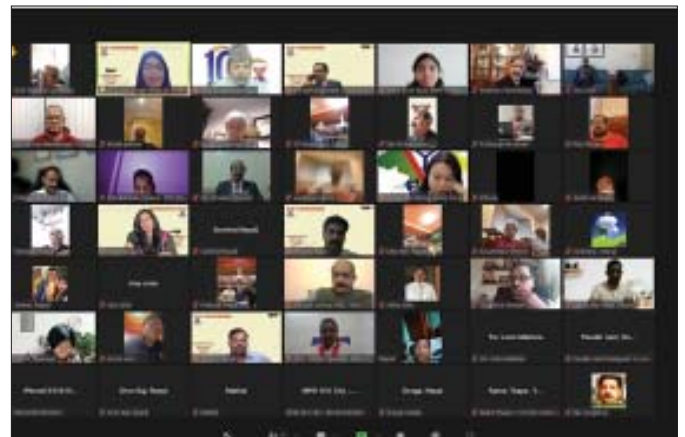
Source: FB page

## Online IBC Meeting and Cultural Exchange

A combined online meeting of IBC fellowship with cultural presentations involving over 60 club members from the Y's Men's Clubs of Sharjah City, Lumbini-Nepal, Long Island-USA, and Peenya-Banglore was held on 1 April 2023.

Special thanks to the participating club presidents and their teams, especially CP Sophia George and CS Preetha Jacob of Sharjah City club for ensuring a successful fellowship meeting. Similarly, thanks to the leaders and other members from the Asia Pacific Area, US Area, and India Area for their participation.

RDE Dpak Bhandari Mst, Southeast Asia Region



## Sri Lanka: Medical Help Extended



The Y's Men's Club of Moratuwa provided a lifesaving support of LKR 705,000 (approx USD 2350) of the needed LKR 10 million to a thalassemia stricken child from Kekirawa, in the North Central Province, Sri Lanka. Baby Gaveena Bandara of Kekirawa, has been suffering from thalassemia for a long time and was in need of urgent bone marrow surgery.

In the picture are Club President Nimal C. Dias (far right) and Club Secretary Veraan De Mel (third from right) with Baby Gaveena and her parents.

We invite leaders of clubs, Districts and Regions to send in their stories and articles for publication in YMI World.

The deadline for submission for the next issue is

**31 August 2023.**

*Hurry!*

## Russia: Active as Ever

At the Russia Regional Conference held in Ufa (Ural-Siberia District) held in early May, 24 participants representing 13 clubs from three districts of Russia (Barents, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg) heard their District Governors present reports of activities during the year.

Lilia Shalneva (Barents District) reported how they help a nursing home by being as informal as they can be. They hold concerts for elderly people often and give presents and postcards to them. Club members visit them four times a year to keep them company. Members carry knitted mittens, socks, and Easter postcards made by children in kindergarten since elderly people like them.

In Yekaterinburg, it is the cooperation with the YMCA that was in focus as reported by L. Konovalova. Club members regularly organise camps for young people, where they teach children to cook in a playful way, conduct classes at the school of a young lady, and put on performances in English.



Good Angel Award winner Ludmila Kargopoltseva

The club from St. Petersburg visited families where disabled children are brought up and interviewed parents with whom they shared their problems, requests, and suggestions on how to overcome these difficulties. Now all this material has to be analysed.

The cultural programme at the end of the day provided a fresh dose of energy. Ballet lovers visited the Bashkir Opera and Ballet Theatre to watch Corsair. A sightseeing tour of Ufa was organised; there was also an opportunity to admire the city from the boat. The visits to museums such as the Nesterov Art Museum, the National Museum of Bashkiria,



The participants at the Regional event

the Museum of Archeology and Ethnography, and the Tulkin Art Museum left an indelible impression.

This year's Good Angel Award was given to Ludmila Kargopoltseva of Khibiny-Tietta club (Barents District).

A new Regional team led by the incoming RD Ludmila Tukina was sworn in. RD Ludmila acquainted the audience with her work plans for the year and also named future Service Directors.

Rimma Belogurova, RD Russia 2022/2023



Cleaning up the premises

## Hong Kong: Paper Sculpture/Art Workshop



YMI Hong Kong District conducted a three-dimensional paper sculpture/art workshop in April using recycled cardboard under the leadership of sculptor Pan Xingqi and artist Peng Shuyi on the theme, "To be a caring and inclusive society."

The workshop which lasted just under two hours was attended by several students of the Islamic DeVishan Memorial Middle School and their work was judged by the instructors as being of high quality.

Selina Chan



## DOCUMENT

# “Water Justice Manifesto” at UN Water Conference

A “Water Justice Manifesto” - signed by over 500 organisations - was presented at the UN Water Conference on 23 March, from the General Assembly Plenary hall podium, at the high-level segment, by the People’s Water Forum members. Y’s Men International expresses its solidarity with these organisations by endorsing the contents of the Manifesto as part of its quest to further the objective of achieving the preservation of the environment and contributing to the fulfilment of Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely, “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” by 2030.

The manifesto amplifies the voices of the unheard frontline water defenders and insists that fundamental issues be placed at the center of water policies at the global, regional, national, and international levels.

“Access to water and sanitation are fundamental human rights,” the manifesto reads. “Water is a common good, and must be accessible to all without discrimination, under public control and not a commodity.” Water policies must also prioritize the sustainable management of rivers, lakes, wetlands, springs, and aquifers, the manifesto notes.

The manifesto concludes with the demand for a “home” for water at the UN by creating a multilateral intergovernmental mechanism to address the water crisis.

The undersigned organizations, Indigenous Peoples, social movements and water defenders address the United Nations at the 2023 UN Water Conference to amplify the voices of the unheard and insist that the following fundamental issues be placed at the center of water policies at the global, regional, national and subnational levels:

1. Access to water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. Water is a common good, and must be accessible to all without discrimination, under public control and not a commodity. Personal and domestic uses of water, including for hygiene, should have the highest priority over productive uses, such as agri-business and industry.
2. Water policies must prioritize the sustainable management of rivers, lakes, wetlands, springs, and aquifers, guaranteeing their good ecological status, within the framework of the human right to a healthy environment and as key to confronting ongoing crises of pollution, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Governments must ensure that agri-business and industrial users are accountable and responsible for their use of and impact on all natural resources, including water, based on legislation, regulation and enforcement and not rely on voluntary measures.
3. Indigenous Peoples have distinct and inherent rights, as well as their own knowledge systems to relate to water in a harmonious way, and States must, therefore, recognize their status as collective subjects of rights and respect their territorial rights, their right to self-determination and their right to be consulted to obtain free, prior and informed consent to any project that affects them, and ensure that the management of their livelihoods, including water, is carried out in accordance with their own standards, in compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
4. States should give due recognition and support to community water and sanitation management practices, as well as to the organizations promoted, among others, by rural communities and Indigenous Peoples, by developing public-community partnerships respectful of their knowledge and traditions.
5. In most countries, rural populations and those living in informal urban settlements are the most discriminated against in terms of access to water and sanitation services. It is the obligation of states to make access for these populations their highest priority. International cooperation must prioritize these groups in its actions.
6. The active, free, and meaningful participation of “rights holders” in all water policy issues should be recognized, supported and guaranteed, with an emphasis on the substantially equal participation of women, overcoming the marginalization they suffer, despite the fact that they bear the greatest responsibility for and the work of supplying water to their families. Such participation must have the capacity to influence decision making, overcoming false participatory models, which only legitimize decisions taken by societal elites.
7. Water and sanitation services must always be guided by human rights, leaving no one behind, including those who, because they live in situations of vulnerability, marginalization, or poverty, find it difficult to pay. Privatization, commodification or financialization of water and sanitation services are a risk to the fulfillment of human rights, and should therefore not be considered as policies at the global, national or local level, as well as in international cooperation, which should instead promote public ownership and management, strengthened through public-public and public-community partnerships.
8. States must protect and guarantee the rights of workers, as well as decent, fair and equitable working conditions. Access to services in spheres of life outside the home must urgently receive a high level of priority in public policies, including access in public spaces, workplaces, detention centers, schools and health facilities, and marketplaces where traders sell food and other goods in the informal economy.
9. To solve the water crisis the current fragile UN multilateral framework must be overcome by moving toward governance that can meet the challenges presented above, establishing an intergovernmental mechanism for regular water and sanitation meetings, and concrete mechanisms for monitoring the commitments made, in which human rights subjects and holders participate fully, effectively and meaningfully.

As human rights holders and water defenders, often criminalized and persecuted for defending human rights, we demand that the UN prioritize dialogue and collaboration with frontline communities in the implementation of SDG 6 including Indigenous Peoples, peasant communities, those living in informal settlements, populations discriminated against on the basis of gender, descent, and class, and all those who still do not have guaranteed access to safe drinking water and sanitation.



# Celebrating our Past, Present, and Future

*Mrs Debbie Redmond  
International Historian*



*Let us continue to save our  
wonderful work in photos and stories*

While we have already celebrated our wonderful history in March in Taipei, it is important to continue to recognise our accomplishments, plan for our future, reflect on our achievements, and preserve our ongoing work.

Let's take a moment to carefully document the work of our clubs, Regions, and Areas. It's important to preserve the written history, the listing of service work, and our photographs. As we pass our leadership and projects to other people, let us also maintain the information too.

All too often a club will rely on one person to keep the photos and documents. Is there a back up plan? If something happens to that person or to the archived items, how is the club going to have the history for future members to see?

We have lost so many clubs (and even Regions) due to aging of members and there is little to show for their great efforts unless the items are preserved. There are several ways to save items, such as making sure the information is available to more than one person. The saved items can be placed in some kind of archive such as with the local YMCA the club has supported (they often have their archives stored or placed with an archivist), a local historical society, or digitised and saved to the cloud.

The International Headquarters now has an [online digital storage system](#) set up to receive digital records. Follow the link to register. For more information, email [moscholar@gmail.com](mailto:moscholar@gmail.com)



*Mrs Debbie Redmond at International RDE Summit  
12 - 14 March 2023 in Taipei, Taiwan*

Source: IP News (June 2023)  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CiY-nCHSal-EeM\\_6lcKNRu1TrBcT68gT/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CiY-nCHSal-EeM_6lcKNRu1TrBcT68gT/view)



## Internships 4 Global Outreach #IGowithYMI

IGo is a work experience programme of Y's Men International and the YMCA for young people aged 18 to 29 within the YMI family or member of YMCA staff. Internally sourced, IGo offers a variety of short-term opportunities to live and work in a foreign environment. IGo internships seek to promote:

### 4 KEY ACTIONS



#### ENGAGE

##### BUILD YOUR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Experience different cultures and foreign languages. Broaden your horizons. Gain perspective. Become an informed and active global citizen.

#### CONNECT

##### BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL NETWORK

Meet new people. Cultivate life-long friendships. Share international fellowship. Complement your personal and professional network.

#### BUILD

##### BUILD YOUR RESUME

Gain work and life skills to enhance your CV. Make yourself a more attractive job candidate, an asset to a potential employer and to the world.

#### EMPOWER

##### BUILD YOUR SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

Develop self assurance. Find your voice. Channel for your knowledge. Become a leader. Take action. Enable a better world.

Scan to learn more

